

THE APOSTLE OF UNITY

A Biographical Study
OF
MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD



BY
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A word may be said about this book. There was long standing need for a biography of this able son of India. The author had written more than half of it when he fell ill. He requested Mr Hira Lal Seth to finish the last three chapters of the book. Mr Seth was good enough to give his valuable time and write the three chapters. Without his help the book would have remained incomplete. The author wishes to thank him for this.

July 31, 1942

H L KUMAR

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CHAPTER I.

PART PLAYED BY MUSLIMS IN INDIA'S STRUGGLE

No single man has done more during the past thirty years to impress upon the Mussalmans of India, educated or uneducated, the necessity of sinking all their differences pooling up all their resources and putting in their full weight with the Indian National Congress in its struggle for freedom than Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. His integrity of moral character, his arduous efforts for national unity and his untiring spirit of self-sacrifice have perhaps won him the exalted position that he occupies to-day in Indian politics. He is pre-eminently fitted to be called the Divine Captain of India's nationalism, for, in the whole of his life he has ceaselessly endeavoured to nullify the arguments put forth by the reactionaries in advising the Mussalmans to disassociate themselves from the Congress from Sir Syed's rise to power to the Two Nation theory of Mr Jinnah. He was perhaps the one single soul who stood out for the National Democracy at a time when "the great Moslem leader, Sir Syed Ahmad, had warned his co-religionists that a parliamentary system would subject them to the predominant Hindus and that loyalty to Britain was the soundest policy."

Before, however, the influence and the career of this remarkable personality are discussed it would be necessary to narrate briefly the part played by the Muslim leadership for the national awakening in the country.

The Mussalmans played a prominent role in the country-wide revolt of 1857—the last armed attempt to regain the lost throne of India and so also in bringing up the Indian National Congress—a peaceful and constitutional organisation—to attain National Self-Government for India. But unfortunately to-day 'Two Nation theory is freely mentioned and the great National organisation is openly condemned. It is characterised as a Hindu Body even by those Muslims who themselves conducted its deliberations for several years. It would be interesting therefore to take the readers back to the events of the year 1857 when according to some political thinkers the first war of Indian Independence was fought and then to the year 1885 when the first meeting of the Indian National Congress was held.

It was during the days of muslim supermacy that the British Authority was established in India. They were the trustees of this sub-continent when the foreigners forced their entry into it. After the death of Aurangzeb, the last Moghul Emperor of Delhi, no strong prince was left in the ruling dynasty to centralize his authority or to withhold the Afghan invaders who fearlessly frequented the

country, plundered her enormous wealth and mercilessly tore the integrity of the mighty Moghal Empire during the first half of the 18th century. There was equally no far-sighted soul available in the declining empire who could apprehend the unfortunate consequences which the trade monopolies and subsequent territorial acquisition by the foreign adventurers were to result in. The country was disrupted into a number of independent states affording opportunity to the foreigners to exploit the existing rivalry among the ruling chieftains to their own advantage.

In their mad race for ascendancy and power the native chieftains frequently invited the intervention of European traders, promising huge returns in the form of territories and wealth. These incompetent rulers could not actually understand at the time that the ground was slipping swiftly from under their feet. Their eyes were opened only when Sirajuldaula, the last prince who realized the menace of European conquests was defeated at Pallasy in 1757 by the combined forces of Clive and Mir Jaffar and the superiority of the White man on the field was first discovered.

The representatives of a British Trading concern who had come down to India with the deliberate purpose of finding markets for their products were now the virtual masters of India and the defeated chieftains were no better than helpless spectators of an administration controlled entirely by

the foreigners. But it did not take them long to realize that each one of them was deprived of his territory and power one by one and that the land that had been magnificiently governed by their ancestors for over 700 years had silently been transferred to the control of foreigners

To show how India has been relegated to a state of utter destitution and poverty during a hundred year's reign of the East India Company we would content ourselves with quoting from the writings and utterances of two well known Englishmen John Bright, during the discussions in the House of Commons, once spoke that it had "introduced an incredible amount of disorder and corruption into the state and poverty and wretchedness among the people" While describing the blessings of "*Kampani Bahadur*" as the East India Company was called at that time a well known English writer Mr. H M Hyndaman in his book "*Awakening in Asia*" said "What the total amount of wealth may have been which was abstracted from India and transported to England without any valuable return at the end of the eighteenth century will probably never be known It must have been quite enormous, transcending indeed the drain from America to Europe which followed upon the discoveries of Columbus and his successors"

' There are the records of the East India Company," he further wrote "to the conduct of

the fortune hunters of that halcyon period of plunder India was the El Dorado of the unscrupulous and cruel commercial adventurer The legitimate proceedings of the great Company, chartered by Queen Elizabeth and successfully carried on up to our own time were bad enough There is no doubt about that It was no rose water management which paid such stupendous dividends and drove the stock of the lucky shareholders to such an enormous premium But the illegitimate business of the East was infinitely worse in every respect Even the lowest commercial morality cannot justify the robbery and rascality which pervaded many departments of English administration in India from the time of Lord Clive's rise to power until the first Governor Generalship of Lord Cornwallis "

After a full century of conquests and annexations of Indian territories of accumulation and transportation of Indian wealth and a deliberate and merciless exploitation of Indian resources the conquerors found that the very forces who had rallied round them a hundred years ago openly took up arms against them The mercenary Indian troops who had been a source of strength to the alien conquerors became directly hostile to them The Nation made an armed attempt to rise but the insurrection failed

This National revolt which goes by the name of the Sepoy Mutiny and which the nationalists regard as

India's first War of Independence was fought under the leadership of a Muslim. So if the incompetency of muslim chieftains was responsible for the establishment of the British Authority in India, the attempt for laying a conspiracy to supplant her also was conceived in a Muslim brain. Tantia Topee and the famous Rani of Jhansi also, by no means, played an insignificant part in the revolt, nevertheless, the banner lifted first at Meerut was by a muslim hand.

(2)

For nearly three decades after the failure of the attempt there were no signs of awakening in India until 1885 when the Indian National Congress came into being. This was also a *national rising* but altogether of a different character. People of different communities and creeds assembled together year after year and discovered a common ideal for the nation, "the attainment of Swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means."

The organisation had its origin as a national body and it retains its national character upto the present day. There is no lack of instances in its pages when people of different religious creeds and interests laid down their lives to carry it successfully through innumerable vicissitudes in its formative stages.

Any student of Indian politics, howsoever prejudiced he may be, cannot go through the pages of history without paying a respectful homage to

the memories of late Badur-ud Din Tyabji, Maulvi Mazhar ul-Haq, Nawab Syed Mohd. Bahadur, Hasan Imam, the Ali Brothers, Dr Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan, the towering muslim intellectual stalwarts who dedicated their lives to the honour and strength of the Indian National Congress and raised the banner of freedom high at a time when the country was lost in a state of utter confusion

The Khan Brothers, embodiments of sacrifices with their following of red shirt volunteers, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the gifted muslim divine, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Mr Asaf Ali, Dr. S D Kitchlew, Mian Iftikhar-ud Din, Dr Ashraf, most sensitive and sanest political leaders Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani, Mufti Kufait Ullah and Syed Atta Ullah Shah Bukhari, the highest authority on Islam to-day, are playing no insignificant part in determining the national decisions of the Congress. Their devotion to Islam, their knowledge of Islamic culture and their sacrifices for the Islamic cause in India or in the world cannot perhaps be excelled by any other muslim politicians in the country who profess to be the custodians of Islamic rights in India

A review of the past activities of the present self styled trustees of Muslim rights who to-day form a most formidable block in the way of Indian National Congress and consequently in the progress of the Nation towards independence, would lead the readers to the conclusion that they owe their

present popularity and position. to this virile organisation of patriots and 'that' they 'have unfortunately in the later years auctioned their souls in exchange for a mere few crumbs that fell from the beaucracy's table.

Malik Barkat Ali, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Dr. Mohd. Alam and the late Sir Fazal-i Hussain of the Punjab, most of them the strongholds of the Unionist Party in the province, Raja of Mahmoodabad, Chowdri Khaliq-ul-zaman and Maulana Hasarat Mohani of U. P. who constitute to-day a very strong opposition to the Congress, Mr. Fazal Haq, the tiger of the Muslim League and 'a most reactionary prime minister of Bengal and last and by no means the least Mr. M. A. Jinnah, the well known Qaide-Azam and the greatest champion of muslim rights in India, most of them are children of the Congress, who have disowned it. It was only due to their devotion and service to the Indian National Congress in the prime of its life that they were shot up to this prominence. The present author has searched out a very large collection of their utterances and writings of those days when they were accredited spokesmen of the Congress upto the time the lust of power had not taken them up. The readers would be delighted to know such a documentary exposition of these enemies of the Congress and the writer too has an ardent desire to falsify their position with a view to serving the cause of Indian Nationalism and

to impart caution to the muslim Intelligentsia that those who live and prosper by exploiting the muslim masses and raising the cry of "Islam in Danger" are not the friends but the enemies of not only the Congress and the country but of Mussalmans also. But as even a brief narration and mere statement of facts and figures itself compiles a big volume thus exceeding the scope and object of the present publication, they are therefore reserved for another separate volume which when compiled will contain a detailed account of the lost leaders of the Indian National Congress exposed by their own writings and utterances. Stray instances of such betrayals on their part will however, be found in the following pages when they appear in connection with the incidents connected with Maulana Azad's life but a comprehensive and detailed account has unavoidably been omitted.

Congress has all along been a national organisation with common aspirations and ideals for all communities and it retains that position even to-day. Gandhiji in his speech on the occasion of the second Round Table Conference gave a very noble description of the Congress. He said "It represents no particular community, no particular class, no particular interest. It claims to represent all Indian interests and all classes. It is a matter of the greatest pleasure to me to state that it was first conceived in an English brain. Allan Octavian Hume, we knew as the Father of the Congress

It was nourished by two great Parsees, Pherozeshah Mehra and Dadabhai Naroji, whom all India delighted to recognise as its Grand Old Man. From the very commencement the Congress had Mussalmans, Christians, Anglo-Indians, I might say all religions, sects, creeds, represented upon it more or less fully. The late Budr-ud-din Tayabji identified himself with the Congress; we have had Mussalmans as presidents of the Congress, and parsees too..

"As you know, the late Maulana Mohamed Ali whose presence also we miss to-day, was a president of the Congress and at present we have four Mussalmans as members of the Working Committee which consists of 15 members..... .

"The position the Congress took up in 1920 remains the same to-day, and so you will see that the Congress has attempted from its very beginning to be what it has described itself to be, namely, National in every sense of the term....."

In the light of the above facts and so many others which will be revealed in the following pages there is absolutely no justification on the part of fanatics to challenge the national character of the Congress and any attempt therefore on their part to mar its representative character will not only be a grave injustice to the National solidarity but also to the mighty sacrifices the muslim patriots rendered towards the liberation of their country.

As a matter of fact it will be an unholy attempt on their part to deny the sacrifices of the brave Pathans who gladly faced the British bullets like heroes in the field and will be calculated to be a treacherous conspiracy to under rate the unbroken record of sufferings and self sacrifices that the self-respecting Ahrars and sagacious Ulemas did to vindicate the honour of India.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE

The authors of the Indian mutiny had so well laid the conspiracy and so tactfully excited the dearest feelings and prejudices of the people that not only did the soldiers of all creeds become hostile to the Britishers but the people as a whole took up arms against the alien rulers. Instigation on the basis of mere conquests by the foreigners could not perhaps have succeeded in outraging the mass psychology, nor could have the persistent transfer of wealth proved a sufficient reason to prepare the country for direct hostilities, but the appeal to the religious sentiments in India was more than enough to rouse the masses to an open revolt against their rulers.

The people of India and especially the Muslims who had recently lost their authority found themselves menaced to be swallowed by a new religion and culture. They looked with suspicion on the continued activities of foreign missionaries who had come down to India with the British occupation of the country. So the soul of the country revolted. At the failure of the insurrection, many who took active part in the fight either left the country out of sheer disgust or for fear of punishment.

Muslims were shocked more than any other community because it was only recently that they had administered authority and spread their religion in the country. So the most sensitive of them took their way to Islamic countries.

Maulana Khair-ud Din, a sensitive patriot and a descendent of a well known family of Ulemas that had for long flourished at the Moghul courts, shocked by the failure of the last attempt to re-establish the Indian rule left the country for good. Since he was a renowned scholar of Arabic literature and an admitted authority on Islam in his time Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan of Turkey invited him to his own country, in response to which he went over to Constantinople. In a very short period he made his mark there as a learned scholar. He wrote several books in Arabic which are even to-day regarded as a most valuable treasure in Arabic literature. He had a magic effect in his speeches which exercised mighty influence over Mussalmans. On account of his inherited intelligence and first rate knowledge of Islamic culture he had been able to create a very large following not only in India but also in other Islamic countries. A large number of his devotees are even to-day found in Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi and in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Ceylon and Java.

In 1872, he conceived the idea of making improvements in the Nahar-i-Zubeda of Mecca which had for long been in a hopeless condition. With this noble idea the family proceeded to the

Holy Place where the Great Prophet Mohamed was born The Maulana through his spiritual influence collected a huge sum of Eleven Lakhs and accomplished this great task within a very short period It was here in September 1888 which coincides with 1305 of the Arabic year that the boy Ahmed Abu Kalam who in the later years of his life distinguished himself as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was born

Besides anything else two main factors that prophesied the greatness of the boy were his grand ancestry and the holy land which gave birth to him From grand-father as well as grand mother's side he inherits the well known doctors of divinity and widely respected men of intellect and courage. He is descendent of Sheikh Jamal ud Din who was welcomed at the court of Akbar and was looked upon with esteem and respect for his learning and saintliness Unlike the flatterer divines who are generally found in the courts of the princes ' he was one of those few who declined to sign the manifesto drawn up by the worldly wise divines of Akbar's time endorsing Akbar's claim to be the founder of Din-i-Ilahi or the new divine religion "

His distinguished mother was also a great scholar of Arabic literature and Islamic culture She was the niece of Sheikh Mohd. Bin Tahir, the Mufti of Holy Madina Her study of Holy Quran and its explanation was of a unique character. Besides the religious distinctions in Maulana's family which went to the making of a great scholar, and a great

preacher of Islam in him he also inherits administrative intelligence Maulana Munavir-ud Din, the father of his distinguished mother had been a Minister of Education for a fairly long time during the reigns of Shah Alam and Akbar the Second, the last two titular Moghul Emperors of Delhi Still proceeding to another generation further Maulana Rashid-ud-Din, the father of Maulana Munavar-ud-Din held a high post of the Great Qazi of Lahore for several years and was Special Advisor to the Subedar which at that time was equivalent to the Governor of the Province These are some of the few distinguished traditions of the distinguished family which the Maulana inherits

(2)

In the year 1907 his father at the invitation of his numerous devotees once again came back to the country which he had voluntarily left some five decades back in a state of disgust and helplessness He settled down in Calcutta and devoted himself to the cause of Islamic culture Ahmad Abul Kalam who was generally called Feroze Bakht by his father was nineteen years old at that time He had completed his education and matured his taste for journalism by now He had spent his childhood in Mecca and Madina and completed his studies in the Islamic countries He was endowed with quick intelligence and therefore had the efficiency to grasp anything he set his heart upon Coupled with these virtues his thirst for knowledge gained him a position

which excited the envy of highly reputed scholars His educational career,unlike many an Indian leader, was not shaped in western institutions but it was modelled in quite an oriental fashion

There is no English college or English university which the Maulana attended nor is there any degree of law which the Maulana received, nevertheless, he is a parliamentarian of high repute and he has got a mastery over English which excels perhaps the ablest professors of literature

To sum up his educational career it would be enough to say that he always lived the life of a student It had always been his endeavour to learn all " the wisdom of the East and the West " He is a most talented genius and is endowed with a sensitive brain His power of understanding is unique in all respects And above all he is gifted with the intellect to absorb all that is good It was only on account of these virtues that the knowledge, it would take a decade to learn, he gained at a very young age

Besides the spiritual guidance of his father it was to a Maulvi that the boy Abul Kalam was left to receive education "Not an alien education" was the slogan of the Post mutiny days The mutiny had failed, the insurgents had been subdued long ago but the terror of it was yet there. ' The English education is intended to replace the Indian education, culture and civilization The foreign missionaries aim at replacing Christianity

over Islam." These were the notions widely believed. Travellers were reluctant to travel by *Farangi ki Gari*. Children were preferred to be sent to Maulavis or Pandits. English schools and institutions were considered to be the places for infidels. Maulana's family as we know was one of learned scholars in Islamic literature with a long heritage of religious leadership, so the religious education was intended as the beginning and the end of his educational career.

It was not to be expected at that time that the boy from the dynasty of Muslim priests would in his after life display exemplary feats of statesmanship and that he would be entrusted by the vote of his country to wreck a constitution prepared by the most shrewd, skilful and clever parliamentarians of the world !

The boy was most intelligent and hard-working. In a very short period he imbibed in him the ancestral education and well versed himself in Urdu, Persian and Arabic. Unlike ordinary boys he did not confine himself merely to his usual courses but also interested himself in higher studies and classical literature. Study of history was always the subject of his liking. He read with interest the stories of the Great Prophet and other Muslim patriots who gave away their lives to preserve the sanctity of Islam. Islamic literature and a thorough study of the Holy Quran always had his careful attention even in the days of his early education.

When he was 15, an age when the sense is as yet in a tender stage and when realisation for good or bad is not to be expected, he became *Hafiz* of Quran and was in a position to deliver lectures on it. He further developed his knowledge at the famous Al Azhar University at Cairo and became an authoritative spokesman on history, traditions, culture and education of Islam and the life and teachings of the Prophet. He attained a mastery over Persian and Arabic languages during his career as a student and made his mark as a religious scholar at a very early age. As a result of this he was very soon regarded as one of the greatest Muslim theologians of the time.

(3)

The period from fifteen to twenty years is a formative stage in life. It is here in these years that boys form ideas, convictions and impressions for future life. One is sure to be moulded by his environments during this period. Genuises can be expected to become vagabonds, in the thief's dens and dull dreary heads, sons of rascals and robbers may become priests in churches and monasteries and if intellectuals are favourably circumstanced, miracles are sure to result.

Ahmed who was already endowed with a distinguished heritage, was very greatly inspired by a wide study of the long sufferings and sacrifices of Muslim patriots and the teachings and life of the Prophet. He was enlightened by the study of the Holy Quran.

He therefore took a tour of Islamic countries on a religious errand. He visited Egypt, Iraq, Turkey and Syria, had interviews with the leading statesmen there and was greatly impressed by the great ambitions of the liberty-loving people. It was here at this age that the Maulana was inspired to devote his life for the liberty and freedom of his country.

The Maulana had been a student of history and literature all his life. He very soon realized that in spite of the boycott of English Education by the authors of the Mutiny and subsequent continuation of the policy by the country long after the thunders of the guns and cannons had been silenced, English Education was most essential to understand the diplomatic tactics of the foreign rulers of the country. He therefore seriously took to English Education and persistently stuck to its study. His library to day is an invaluable treasure and a unique collection of books on Literature, Politics, Science, Religion, Philosophy, Economics and on all subjects and in all languages and his leisure hours are always taken away by them.

The Maulana was only in his teens as yet when a life of responsibilities surrounded him. His father had breathed his last in 1908. The followers of the distinguished family expected now that the brilliant son would keep up the ancestral traditions and continue guiding the community like his father. But his thoughts had already taken a different

turn. The idea of becoming a religious head could not create any fascination for him. His achievements, no doubt for his religion are unique in every respect he, nevertheless, hesitated to pick up the thread of his family in the way it was expected of him. Great faith was reposed in him as a religious chief but Nature had expected something greater of him. He was not only to shine in the religious world of Islam but also in the political field of India. He was not only to guide the Muslim followers as a religious priest but also an unfortunate nation as an ambassador of unity. He, therefore, resolved otherwise and took up his pen "to draw the Muslim masses away from the barbed-wire fencing of dogma with which they had been surrounded all the time." He settled down in Calcutta and started "Al-Hilal" an Urdu Weekly.

writings had made him his admirer was only sixteen years old. In 1904 the Maulana paid a visit to the poet and when it was revealed to him that the boy with whom he was talking was the same Abul Kalam whose power of pen had won a special place in his heart, he refused to believe it. Western scholars even now disbelieve such a miraculous reality. They perfectly believe that sense below the age of twenty-five is always immature for such a responsible job as an editorship. But Orient has more than once offered wonderful display of genius to the world. It always gave a magnificent lead to the West even after centuries of political and economic depression. The ideas that Budha, Tagore, Jagdish Bose, Ram Tirath, Iqbal and so many others presented to mankind are even up to this day unsurpassed and will perhaps retain their supremacy and magnificence for years to come.

Abul Kalam was very fond of meeting men of fame in his youth. At the age of 14 he wrote to Maulana Shibli of Bombay initiating important discussions on Urdu literature. The Maulana had already heard of him as one of the sanest and daring editors. He therefore deemed it a pleasure to enter into correspondence with him. He was holding a very high impression about his correspondent because he received several practical suggestions from him. He was under the impression that Abul Kalam must be an experienced and aged editor but was wonderstruck when the mystery of his age

was revealed to him. In 1904, similar to that of poet Halī he paid a visit to Shibli as well, but he did not disclose at the outset that he was the famous editor of "*Lisamul Sīdq*". Shibli accorded a warm reception to him taking the boy as the son of Abul Kalam. He spoke very highly of him. But Shibli's astonishment knew no bounds when the boy in a very humble tone disclosed that he was no other than Abul Kalam himself about whom he was talking in such favourable terms.

Abul Kalam was able to win esteem and respect of the renowned journalists like Abdul Qadir (now Sir) at this age. He contributed several articles in his magazine *Makhzan* of Lahore and made him as one of his admirers in his after life. Nawab Mahasan-ul-Mulk always used to address him as young in years but old in learning.

Most untoward were the days when the Maulana took up his pen. The Muslim reactionaries had come to have a complete control over the masses by a process which is not far to seek.

In the last few attempts to fight foreign domination Muslims, who were the recent emperors of India, suffered very heavily in men, money and resources. They had been relegated to a pitiable state, politically, economically and socially. Another tragedy which added horrors to this position was that the Muslim nobility who had been the leaders of the masses in the past hostilities deemed their security only in loyalty and most faithfully allying

with the rulers. They availed of English education, went abroad for studies and occupied positions of eminence in the bureaucratic regime while the Muslim masses who were mostly religious-minded strictly adhered to the boycott of English education and English traditions. Most of them during the unhappy years had either gone for their education to the Maulvies in the mosques or completely ignored it. From the very infancy they took to their rural industries or agriculture. Hence they were thrown far back in education and Muslim aristocracy came to have the leadership of the community.

CHAPTER III

THE *AL-HILAL* ERA.

In such an atmosphere of political degeneration the Maulana turned to journalism. He selected *Azad* as his pen-name and determined to bring about a revolution in the Aligarh school of thought and set a radical ideal before his community. This idea gave birth to the famous *Al-Hilal* (The Crescent) whose main object was to suppress the growing hatred between the different communities and to encourage all that was true and original in itself.

It was on the 1st of June 1912 that the first issue of *Al-Hilal* came into publication. The Maulana was hardly twenty five as yet but his views were amazingly matured. For over two years he advised his co-religionists to pull their full weight with the patriotic forces in the country through the medium of his news paper. Being a profound scholar of Islamic literature he frequently cited the authority and reference of the Holy Quran. His witty approach to the religious or political problems had always had a touch of divine instructions and as such his articles touched the sensitive among the Muslims and appealed very strongly to their sentiments. There was unique eloquence and tremendous flow in his writings and it was in less than six months of its first publication that the circulation

of the paper crossed a heavy figure of ten thousands and won a position which excited the envy of renowned dailies. The style of the Maulana in *Al-Hilal* was such as to enrapture the poetic minded. The choice of words and the flight of imagination in the prose seemed like beautifully written lyrics. Gradually and steadily the paper became popular. It made its way into the hearts of the progressive Muslims. The imperialism and aristocracy both were shocked at the amazing success the paper was achieving and specially because it had succeeded to a large extent in winning the popular opinion to its own way of thinking. The journal really created a furore.

It was a new departure in journalism and from one end of the country to the other it became the centre of controversy. The old type Muslim leaders were shocked both at the paper's radicalism and the powerful attacks it made on tradition. Threats of murder were given to the young editor. Few papers in the history of Indian journalism have exercised an influence compared to that of *Al-Hilal*.

Within a very short time the devotion of the Muslims to the paper grew so enormous that a single file containing about a dozen of them ordinarily costing two to three rupees was sold for munificent values of a thousand rupees each.

A brief account of my personal experience in this connection may be of interest for the reader. When the writer came to know that a certain devotee of Mau

lana Azad in Lahore had treasured the files of *Al-Hilal* he approached him with the request to part with it at a value of twenty times their original price or against any amount of security for a week or so but the gentleman, although he seemed most needy, plainly refused to do that. He had most carefully preserved most of the literature of Maulana Azad. Tazkara, Tarjman ul Quran, files of *Al-Hilal* and *Albalagh*. Maulana's lectures and writings all were lying in his shelf. Naturally therefore frequent calls were made at his residence and liberal offers were given to him but nothing could easily persuade him. He was impressed later, no doubt after the repeated knocks at his door but the terms under which he agreed were also very queer. He could allow only to see the files at his own house and in his very presence.

This event is itself an evidence of the high moral and divine value that was found in the Maulana's writings besides their journalistic and political worth. The author is a non Muslim and he has the privilege of having studied many of the writings of the Maulana with admiration and wonder, and with gratitude for the spiritual help that they lend and with joy and devotion for the beauty that they possess and can say it on the authority of his own experience that they have got a special charm in them and can never fail to influence the deeds and thoughts of the readers.

Many of the first-rate Muslim leaders of India who look prominent in the Congress to-day have been influenced by the magic pen of the Maulana. No small

a leader than Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan who to-day is honoured with the rightly deserved title of the Frontier Gandhi also received his inspiration from the same powerful pen. "While still at the Aligarh University," writes Yusuf Mehar Ali the well known socialist leader, "Young Ghaffar Khan was profoundly influenced by the political writings of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. That gifted writer's paper *Al-Hilal* was quite a rage at this time. The Maulana held up a new ideal before his community and in brilliant and defiant prose assailed the political shibboleths of the great ones of the Muslim League."

In the words of Mr Asaf Ali, "The writings of Maulana Azad exercised a powerful influence among the Musalmans, and up to this day neither in form nor in substance has it been surpassed though many efforts have been made by several aspirants to reproduce its excellence"

(2)

In 1914 the Great War broke out and with this began an era of suppression for the *Al-Hilal*. At the very outset Great Britain declared that the war was being waged for the liberty and freedom of all the peoples of the world and assured the Musalmans of India that they had no intention of depriving the Sultan of Turkey of his possessions. The people of India at these declarations manifested profound loyalty to their alien rulers and Indian troops fought the battles of Allies in Europe, Mesopotamia and in Palestine and helped them with their blood and money.

The Maulana was already very vigilant but now he watched the march of the events very closely and took the Government to severe task through the columns of his paper whenever there was any deviation on their part from their declared aims

On the other hand framers of the Defence of Realm Act, and the Press Act of 1910 with their sharpened teeth were viewing seriously the boldness adopted by the paper *The Pioneer*, an exponent of the official point of view, which at that time was issued from Allahabad, in a leading article entitled "Pro-Germanism in Calcutta" charged the Maulana with pro German propaganda and drew the attention of the Government to the dauntless spirit demonstrated in it "Ever since the war broke out," says the article "*its (Al-Hilal's)* attitude has been so strikingly pro-German that it must be a matter of amazement to all who read the paper that the Government has managed to tolerate its writings. Possibly this , be accounted for by the fact that the paper attracts little or no attention in Calcutta itself owing to its being published in Urdu, and there can be little doubt that this was one of the main causes which led the editor to choose Calcutta as the place of publication. Another reason may be that the style of the more mischievous articles is very allusive and full of veiled sneers and sarcasms and innuendoes most of which either disappear or lose their effect when translated into English, and it is not likely that many European officials read the paper in original."

"The obvious intention of the writer of these

lines," further writes the *Pioneer*, while making comments on some of the writings of *Al-Hilal*, "is to make his co-religionists believe that Germany is invincible and the power of the British Empire can do nothing to resist its attackswe may safely say that a Government which at such a time as present allows a British subject to publish unchecked malicious insinuations against the British soldiers and sailors at any rate may lay claim to the possession of a most un-Germanic spirit of toleration "

Time and again the attention of the Government was drawn by the paper but it could not effect any change in Maulana's attitude and he continued his fearless criticism of the Government's policy. The Secretary of State was ultimately showered with questions in the House of Commons. The British Government seemed to have felt profoundly disturbed at the straightforwardness of the young editor. Authorities, therefore, hastened to take action. The existing security of the paper was forfeited and another heavy demand of rupees ten thousand was made. Thus the fate of the great paper was sealed. It ceased publication. It was a very great shock to the lovers of *Al-Hilal* and consequently to the well-wishers of the country. Moreover the Maulana himself could not remain inactive at such a critical hour in national history. He was therefore persuaded to take up his pen once again and another weekly appeared under the name of *Al-Balagh*.

* The authorities again found the same powerful

critic although under a different label. The same spirit of *Al-Hilal* was working in the *Al-Balagh*. Colour of the wine was the same, the degree of intoxication it commanded was the same, the bottles in which it was poured were the same, the difference was merely the change in the label. The mighty pen of the Maulana was still a thorn in the path of unchecked ways of the bureaucracy. The Government therefore decided upon a drastic measure.

(3)

Besides the newspapers of Maulana Azad, the Ali Brothers, two outstanding Muslim leaders who by no means played a small part in India's fight for freedom were also running two newspapers respectively at different places to promote the cause of Indian independence. Maulana Mohammad Ali, a graduate of the Oxford University and an outstanding Muslim intellectual edited the *Comrade*, an English weekly at Delhi while his elder brother, Maulana Shaukat Ali, who had been a highly paid officer in the Excise Department of the Government of India, edited the *Hamdard*, an Urdu daily. By the year 1914 all of them had attained an unrivalled position not only in the journalistic field of the country but also came to be recognised as the strongest advocates of the Congress cause in their community.

All of them took up the same cause, viz that of the Muslim countries and independence of India. Maulana Mohammad Ali published a pamphlet entitled "Come over into Macedonia and see it" and then wrote a

stirring article "Evacuate Egypt " These activities of the Muslim patriots, however, could not be tamely accepted by the Government All the three Muslim editors therefore were interned at different places for an indefinite period

Maulana Azad is not only gifted with the power of writing which could go straight to the hearts of the readers but is also endowed with the persuasive eloquence of an orator which very few Indian leaders can lay claim to He has the powers to mould the audience to his own way of thinking He is one of the most gifted orators in the country. There is a tremendous flow both in his writings and in his speeches. He could for hours keep the huge gatherings spellbound. And of all these virtues their most adverse critic the authorities were fully conscious

He was suspected of creating hatred against their Imperial Majesties in his speeches and writings and of having connections with the hostile countries. In addition to the restriction on *Al-Hilal*, therefore, his entry was banned in the provinces of U P., Delhi, Punjab, C P. and Madras On March 23, 1916, another order was served upon him requiring him not to remain, reside or enter Bengal, his residential headquarters

The authorities had perhaps expected that he would defy the order thus offering an opportunity for arrest But the Maulana had never been unaware of their intention. His actions were always premeditated To take a hasty and precipitate step thoughtlessly could never

be expected of him. He very wisely understood that he was rendering more effective service by remaining outside the jail. He therefore thought it expedient to continue guiding the country and avoid his arrest so long as possible and proceeded to Ranchi in the province of Bihar. But his pen was still in his hand and the power and fascination in his tongue were still there. Many of his admirers from far and near continued pouring at his place in Ranchi and took his message to their friends throughout the country. The Government felt highly perturbed at this and as a result of it issued orders for his internment at Ranchi for an indefinite period.

At every plenary session of the Congress resolutions were passed demanding the unconditional release of Maulana Azad and Ali Brothers. A memorial was also submitted to the authorities with over sixty thousand signatures but the Government were not willing to release them until the war came to an end.

Besides the Maulana's writings in the *Al Hilal* and *Al Balagh* the Government also gave forth another reason for his internment. In reply to a question raised by Maulana Mazhar-ul Haq in the Legislative Council the Government declared that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had got connections with the revolutionaries of Bengal.

Whether these allegations on the Maulana's personality were true or not we may not be very competent to arrive at any decisive conclusion. One fact, however, which deserves serious consideration in this respect

and forbids one from acknowledging the allegations as true is his closest alliance with Gandhiji in his later political life. Those who have studied Gandhiji know perfectly well that under no circumstances would he be willing to strike any alliance with the revolutionaries and terrorists. It is no hidden secret that he always refused to compromise with those who did not see eye to eye with him on questions of creed and principle. In the light of these facts one is led to believe that if the Maulana were connected with any such movement he could never have commanded the trust and confidence of Gandhiji up to the present extent.

The allegations under the circumstances do not appear to be sound. On the contrary, this conviction gets stronger that the Maulana's rational discussions and his most sober and sanest way of tackling all the problems had left no other alternative for the Government but to arrest him on the grounds of suspicion.

For approximately four years the Maulana remained in confinement till the amnesty granted by the Royal Proclamation on the 25th December, 1919, when his release was effected.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CLOUDS GATHER

Several events had taken place in the country during the four years' incarceration of Maulana Azad and it seems indispensable to make a brief mention of some of them at least

In January 1918, Mr Lloyd George on the demand of the Indian Muslims had made a statement in which he declared that Great Britain had no intention of depriving the Sultan of Turkey, who was also head of Islamic Church of his territories and declared it in unequivocal terms that they were not "fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race"

The second and the most important event of the duration was the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy On 13th of April, 1919 a large public meeting was announced to be held in the Jallianwala Bagh Thousands of men, women and children irrespective of caste, creed and colour had assembled there Meeting was going on peacefully when General Dyer with a machine-gun and a contingent of military soldiers entered the only narrow path of the Bagh, surrounded with walls from all the four sides and fired 1600 rounds of machine gun Within a few minutes the large gathering of patriots was converted into a heap of dead bodies The Jallianwala massacre

came to the country as a rude shock and whole of the country was horrified to learn of it

The Jallianwala shooting was accompanied by the Martial Law regime in the Punjab. It is a terrible story indeed. Public floggings, crawling on the bellies, death sentences and transportations for life, confiscation of properties and seizure of valuables and exorbitant fines by summary courts and special tribunals were the order of the day.

Col Johnson, Bosworth Smith, Col O'Brien besides Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer were the masters of the situation. No Congress leader was allowed to enter the Punjab and the people were greatly terrorised.

But soon the atmosphere became calm when Gandhi's entry was allowed in the province and the Government announced the appointment of an enquiry committee presided over by Lord Hunter to investigate into the Martial Law atrocities. The people forgot for the moment the terrors of the Martial Law days. The Amritsar Congress at the instance of Gandhiji, even in spite of its most unsatisfactory character, decided to accept the Reforms Act and greatly welcomed the Royal Proclamation granting amnesty to the political prisoners. But this era of co-operation had a very brief life.

(2)

By the middle of 1920 it became thoroughly known that the Government of India neither proposed to take any steps towards the redress of the Punjab grievances.

nor did it seem particular to bring pressure upon the Allies to redress the feeling of the Musalmans of India

1 The findings of the Hunter Commission proved quite contrary to the expectations of the people. The authors of the Punjab atrocities got protection instead of any punishment. Sir Michael O'Dwyer was left untouched and General Dyer was merely declared unfit for future service in India. Even the meagre action taken against them was disapproved by the House of Lords and a reward of gallantry was presented to the authors of the Punjab tragedy by raising huge public subscriptions !

On the other hand, under the terms of Armistice, Turkey was disrupted and divided by the conquerors rendering the Sultan helpless and dependent. Greece got Thrace while the Asiatic possessions of Turkey came to the share of Great Britain and France.

This attitude on the part of the British Government created revulsion in the popular opinion and the country was forced to reconsider seriously the decisions of the Amritsar Congress. The Muslim intellectuals, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Mohamad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Dr Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr Kitchlew and others also joined their heads and in close collaboration of Gandhi and the Congress decided to bring pressure upon the British Government to restore the Sultan of Turkey to his pre-war position.

An All India Khilafat Conference was held in Delhi for the purpose. It was the first of its kind and Gandhiji was called upon to preside over its deliberations. A very important resolution was passed demanding the restora-

tion of Asia Minor and Thrace to the Turks and of the Sultan over the *Jazirat-ul Arab* which included suzerainty of all the holy places in Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria and Palestine and the restoration of temporal powers which the Khalifa had enjoyed as Sultan of Turkey before the Great War

Thus the famous Khilafat movement came into existence. It was a storm in itself. From one end of the country to the other a united front was presented to the Government. Those were the days of unprecedented Hindu-Muslim unity. One is irresistibly reminded of Hindus and Muslims taking their food together in the same utensils drinking water from the same pots, organising common meetings and making speeches from the common platforms.

The most sensational event of the days was a rousing reception to Swami Shardhananda and his magnificent speech in the Juma Masjid at Delhi. It was beyond the wildest of dreams that a Hindu Sanyasi would be allowed to address a Muslim gathering from a Muslim pulpit.¹

Soon the movement became popular. In all the prominent cities, districts and provinces Khilafat Committees were established and a number of conferences were held to popularise the movement. The Maulana presided over many of these conferences, the most important of which was the Bengal Provincial Khilafat Conference held in Calcutta in February 1920. In this Conference, for the first time, even before Gandhiji could introduce the Maulana laid down the

scheme of civil disobedience and non-co-operation

(3)

Readers would remember that at the Amritsar Congress the decision was reached to accept the new Reforms Act. But now that circumstances had changed and the elections under the new constitution were due in November 1920, in view of the changed circumstances the A I C C at Benares resolved to call a special session of the Congress at Calcutta in September, 1920.

The special Calcutta Session of 1920 is one of the most historic sessions of the Congress. It was here that Gandhiji for the first time disclosed his weapon of non-co-operation. Lala Lajpat Rai, the president of the session and Mr C. R. Das, the outstanding leader of Bengal, were against the scheme but the Khilafatists including Maulana Azad, the Ali Brothers and Dr Ansari put their full weight in favour of the resolution. After a heated debate the resolution was carried by a narrow majority but the decision to start the movement was agreed to be made at the Nagpur session by both the parties.

There was an interval of only three months in the Calcutta Special session and the Nagpur Annual session.

The young Maulana, since he was in total agreement with Gandhiji in the matter of exerting direct pressure, undertook a hurricane tour during the interval and carried on a feverish propaganda to convert to his side the majority of opinion in the country.

The Congress session met at Nagpur in December

1920 under the presidency of Mr. C. Vijayaraghavacharia, the well-known Madras leader and side by side with that the All-India Khilafat Committee also held their annual session under the presidency of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. These two sessions held simultaneously at the same place are important for more than one reason. The final decision to part ways with the Government were arrived at this memorable place. Popular opinion in the country had already gained a considerable support for Gandhiji's proposal, nevertheless the Khilafat Conference presided over by one of his trusted allies had assured success for him.

The Maulana delivered a remarkable address which was impressive to the highest degree. He gave a broader and international colouring to the Khilafat movement and declared that non-co-operation had its sanction from Quranic injunction. He said :—

“When the Khilafat agitation commenced, the cry was for saving the holy places from unholy hands, and also for maintaining the integrity of the Turkish Empire. But time has made astounding revelations; and it was now clear that the Khilafat question was intermingled with the world's fight for liberty of all nations.

“The first duty of the Khilafat workers should, therefore, be to confine themselves now to win the liberty of India.

co-operation had its sanction from Quranic injunction. Hindu Muslim unity shall be lasting and was not merely a political expedient as the opponents always tried to make out.

Concluding the President remarked that "the die had been cast and it was for India to show that she was ready to sacrifice all to secure her liberty"

(4)

Besore we proceed to give an account of how the matters reached the climax we must have a glance on one or two important events with which the Maulana was closely associated.

In the middle of January a deputation of Muslim leaders waited upon the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford and the memorial which was submitted to His Excellency besides others was also signed by Maulana Azad. He was asked to accompany the deputation to the Government House but the Maulana did not agree. In his own words, "the late Maulana Mohamed Ali and other friends were insistent that I should join the deputation, but my feeling was that the deputation could not serve any useful purpose"

As was expected, this deputation as well as the second, which later proceeded to England, could not obtain any satisfactory assurance from the British Government

This disappointment although worst in many respects had proved very fortunate for the Congress. The alliance of the Muslims which was so eagerly sought by the Mahatma for the successful prosecution of the non-

co-operation came of its own advantage and the Congress and the Muslims presented a united front to the Government in the coming stormy years.

(5)

In the second annual session of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i Hind held in Delhi under the presidentship of Hazrat Shaikh-ul-Hind the Maulana made a very brilliant speech, the burden of which was the acceptance of non-co-operation as the weapon for future struggle for the attainment of *Swaraaj* and consequently redress of the Khilafat wrongs. Muslim divines from all over the country were present in the conference. As a result of Maulana's efforts a *Fatwa* signed by over 500 Ulamae was issued by the conference requiring the Musalmans to renounce their titles, leave the Government services, resign from the legislative and local bodies. This *Fatwa* or the Decision of the Muslim divines, it should be mentioned, was published in large numbers but was later on proscribed by the Government.

Thus we from the various activities in the country that the matters were reaching the climax and that a storm was almost unavoidable.

CHAPTER V.

THE STORM BURSTS.

By the middle of 1921, from all indications it appeared that the storm was brewing and the outburst in all respects would be terrible both for the country and the Government. In September there occurred the prosecution of Ali Brothers, Dr. Kitchlew, Jagat Guru Shankar Acharya, Maulana Nisar Ahmad, Pir Ghulam Mujaddid and Maulvi Hussain Ahmed in connection with the speeches delivered by them at the All-India Khilafat Conference, Karachi, which in the history of India is known as the Karachi Conspiracy case.

They had given a *Fatwa* declaring it unlawful for any faithful Muslim to serve from that day in the army or help or acquiesce in their recruitment.

At their prosecution, on October 7, a manifesto signed by over 3 dozen leaders of different communities, headed over by the signatures of Gandhiji and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, was issued in which, speaking in their individual capacity, they stated that "it is the inherent right of everyone to express his opinion without restraint about the propriety of citizens offering their services to or remaining in the employ of the Government whether in the Civil or the Military Department."

In November 1921 the Maulana presided over the third annual session of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i Hind.

held in Lahore. As a matter of fact he was the man of the hour and his presence in the conferences or meetings was considered privilege to the organisers. The people of the Punjab distinctly remember unprecedented scenes of Hindu-Muslim unity at that Conference.

It was a Conference of Muslim divines but it was so largely attended by non-Muslims that it looked like a national gathering. The Conference was held at Bradlaugh Hall. It was tastefully decorated with buntings and flowers made of *khadi*. The spacious hall was so much packed that more than half of the people were refused admission for want of space. The Conference was attended besides others by Maulana Kifait Ullah and the late Hakim Ajmal Khan.

Several resolutions were adopted in the Conference but the most important of all was the one condemning the action of Moplahs, who were engaged in forcibly converting the Hindus. The Maulana had been an apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity all his life. He made a vehement speech on the resolution and declared that Islam never allowed forcible conversion. The Maulana had to leave the Conference before its conclusion because he was required in Bombay by Gandhiji in connection with the disturbances at the royal visit of the Prince of Wales.

(2)

In November 1921, the Prince of Wales (now the Duke of Windsor) came to India. Great Britain proclaimed that the Prince had come to acknowledge the aid

that India had given to the Empire in the Great War and to express his thanks to the people on behalf of the King-Emperor. The country had been enraged because the Government had broken the Khilafat pledges and the Punjab wrongs had remained undressed. As an expression of its resentment the Congress declared a boycott of the visit of the Prince. On the 17th of November, the Prince was to land in Bombay. The Working Committee met at Allahabad on Oct. 7, 1921, and passed the following resolution :—

" The Working Committee is of the opinion that on the day of the landing of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales there should be a general hartal throughout India and as to the effective boycott of any public welcome to his Royal Highness during his visit to the different cities of India the Working Committee leaves the arrangement in the hands of respective Provincial Congress Committees."

chronic state of starvation. It was an outrage and a crime, and the Congress proclaimed a boycott to be carried out in as thorough a manner as possible."

The country gracefully responded to the voice of the leaders. On the day the Prince landed in Bombay he was greeted with a country-wide hartak. People suspended their business throughout the country and made emphatic condemnation of British policy in all prominent towns and cities of India. In Bengal, the hartal had a special effect because in the entire history of the political struggle of the country the leadership at this particular time in the province was the most intelligent, far sighted, and enthusiastic. As a result of the most powerful and impressive lead of Deshbandhu C. R. Dass and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad coupled with the arduous endeavours of the hot blooded youth Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose who had recently joined the Congress after giving up the princely career of an I.C.S. the people of Bengal demonstrated most enthusiastic scenes at the occasion. In the words of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose

"So great was the success in Calcutta that the Anglo-Indian papers, the *Statesman* and the *Englishman* wrote the next day that Congress volunteers had taken possession of the city and the Government had abdicated and they demanded immediate and drastic action against the Congress volunteers."

Within 24 hours the volunteers organisations of the Congress and Khilafat were declared illegal. The two leaders, Mr. C. R. Dass and Maulana Azad

joined their heads and both the organisations—the Provincial Congress Committee and the Provincial Khilafat Committee in collaboration with each other decided to defy the ban imposed on the volunteers organisations. As a result of the tussle that took place between the authorities and the volunteers on this issue all the prominent leaders in Bengal were taken into custody with the exception of the Maulana and Mr C R Dass. By the morning of 10th December over 1000 volunteers had been arrested and imprisoned.

According to the programme the Prince was to reach Calcutta on 25th of December and the Government thought it safer to take into custody the leaders of the movement before the due date.

In the evening of the 10th December the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, Calcutta, accompanied by a European Inspector came to Maulana's residence and then to Mr C R Dass's and arrested both of them under section 18 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Both of them gave stirring messages to the people of Bengal. The Maulana said "To all the national workers my message should be conveyed that all the people should remain active, firm and determined at their respective posts. Nobody should come to see me and leave his post or neglect his duty. The arrest should be treated as an ordinary and expected incident. No extraordinary prominence should ever be attached to it. It will pain me extremely if any of the workers tries to waste even a single hour in his attempt to see me."

C R Dass was brought to the police station twenty

minutes after the Maulana and then both were taken to the Presidency Jail, Alipore, in an open car and were confined in the European wards

(3)

As a matter of fact the Maulana was quite prepared for his arrest. During the last year and a half he had repeatedly challenged the Government to arrest him.

During the month of March 1921 when he had undertaken his third tour of the Punjab along with Gandhiji his arrest seemed quite imminent. At this time public meetings, were prohibited in the districts of Lahore and Amritsar under the Seditious Meetings Act. Gandhiji, who was so eagerly awaited in the province, could not deliver any speech in these two districts and it was only in Gujranwala that he could address the people. The Maulana, who had got special confidence in the Punjabees, declared his intention to address meetings in Lahore and Amritsar and to offer himself for arrest. It was therefore announced that the Maulana would deliver a speech at the occasion of the Juma Prayers at the Badshahi Mosque. The Punjab Ministry at this complained to Gandhiji in reply to which he clearly said that although Civil Disobedience is not allowed to the Congressmen in general, its door is always open for such responsible persons as Maulana Azad.

As was announced, Maulana conducted the Juma Prayers at the appointed time and also delivered a forceful speech on the subject of non co-operation. The *Civil and Military Gazette*, the Anglo-Indian daily of

Lahore and an exponent of the Government viewpoint in a leading article drew the attention of the authorities of the open defiance of law and order in the Badshahi Mosque, Lahore. Similarly the Maulana defied the Seditious Meetings Act which was then in force in Amritsar and delivered an equally forceful speech in the Juma Masjid, Amritsar. But even in spite of the open defiance of law and order by a rebel the Punjab Government could not muster the courage to arrest him.

In August of the same year at the arrest of the Ali Brothers and their colleagues in connection with the speeches delivered by them at the Karachi Khilafat Conference, the Maulana delivered a powerful speech at the Holiday Park, Calcutta, before an audience of over twenty thousand in which he boldly announced that—

“The resolution, in connection with which the Ali Brothers are arrested, is an admitted and a well known problem of Islam. And it is the duty of every Musalman to make this announcement. That resolution was in fact prepared by me and was first adopted under my presidentship in the Town Hall of Calcutta. More than that I proclaim the contents of that more emphatically here at this time. I ask the C I D reporters sitting here to note word by word. If this is a crime, the Government should remember its committal will continue for all times.”

Immediately after that the Karachi case accused were committed to the sessions and the Maulana hurled another very strong challenge at the Government to arrest him. He issued a most daring statement to the

press in which he said :

"It was myself who first of all prepared this resolution for the Calcutta Khilafat Conference. I had written it with my own pen. And it was adopted under my very presidency. Later the Jamiat-ul-Ulama met at Delhi and I gave my signatures on this resolution in the form of a *Fatwa*. Then the Jamiat held its meeting at Bareilly. I was the president of this Conference also and it was proposed and adopted from the chair. Moreover I have written a special chapter on this in the "Khilafat Journal" and its innumerable copies have been distributed. Similarly I also stated the same at Calcutta, Delhi, Karachi and Bombay etc. I also confess that this was not only my oral expression but I have also acted upon it and I have always been urging the people to act upon it. If this was "conspiracy" or "sedition" I admit it a thousand times. It was proper for the Government that they should have started a case against me before even the Ali Brothers who have only copied and followed."

He was no doubt expecting his arrest at all the times in the last year and a half yet in the second week of December it appeared to him as if the right time for that had come. Two days before his arrest, that is on 8th of December, he wrote a lengthy message for his countrymen in the course of which he said :

"In my arrest I see a new awakening of self-consciousness in the Musalmans of India. I may be well proud of the Punjab, Frontier and Bihar Provinces. The Muslims of these three provinces had always

responded to my calls with love, confidence and faith in me. In the last ten years they had been my only hopes. I am sure that my arrest will stir their spirits to action. The facts which could not be revealed in my speeches and writings during the last three years will become obvious to them with my arrest

"To the Musalmans I would specially request to maintain prior of all their Islamic respectability. They should excel all other brothers at this decisive hour of trial. If they lag behind, their existence would be a disgraceful blot on the 40 crore Musalmans of the world.

"In the end I have got a message for the Bengal Government also. *Hartal* on the 24th is unavoidable. And the chain of the Khilafat and Congress volunteers will remain continued with the doubled vigour and energy"

Gandhiji always possessed great faith in the sincerity and patriotism of the Maulana and the Maulana too deeply respected him. Before going to the jail therefore he left a message for Gandhiji also. He said

"I wish to be the first man to congratulate you over your victory. Please do not consider this action of mine as hasty. I can well predict the inevitable situation and I do not wish that in congratulating you anyone of you should steal a march on me. Your comrades are dwindling in numbers but this loss is being compensated by divine aid. I was really much pained and aggrieved to find you overpowered with the ever increasing anxiety after the sad

event of Bombay But now Calcutta has awakened to present to you the pleasant fruits of success in place of your sorrowful feelings of the past

My last message has its origin in the same one ten years back "Fear not, grieve not Success will be yours —

"Have faith firm faith in your own true self* "

The case of the Maulana was most interesting* He was arrested under section 18-2 of the Criminal Amendment Act but the Government wanted to entangle him under still another serious case When on 6th January, 1922, the proper proceedings of the case commenced before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Calcutta, Rai Bahadur Tarak Nath Sadhu, the Public Prosecutor withdrew the case under this section and another case was filed against him under Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code This prosecution was in connection with the two alleged objectionable speeches delivered by the Maulana on the 1st and 15th of July, 1921, respectively at the Mirzapore Park, Calcutta

There was always a huge rush of Maulana's admirers and followers both in and outside the court on the dates of hearing As soon as the Maulana was brought in the court room all the lawyers and visitors present used to stand up as a mark of respect The court room would echo with the loud slogans of *Bande Matram* and *Allah-o-Akbar* These demonstrations,

Originally all the messages and statements are written in the polished Urdu by the Maulana himself and the above are only the translations Naturally therefore the real beauty could not be expected to be reproduced in English

however, caused a little embarrassment to the authorities. In order to escape from this ever increasing public enthusiasm, therefore, it was considered necessary to transfer the case to the Civil Presidency Jail. No visitor was allowed there and on the first day even the press reporters were refused admission. On 9th of February at 12 o'clock in the noon the Magistrate sent for the Maulana in complete secrecy and sentenced him to one year's rigorous imprisonment.

In his brief judgment he said that he had carefully read both of his speeches and given his most serious consideration to them and had reached the conclusion that they were seditious. He concluded that the accused had tried to create disaffection and hatred against the Government established by law, and was therefore sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. The Maulana, on hearing the announcement, smilingly uttered "It is much less than what I had expected."

Begum Azad on hearing the judgment sent a telegram to Gandhiji, which the Central Telegraph Office, Calcutta, refused to transmit. The telegram was a long one. Here are some extracts

"The judgment of the case of my husband Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has been announced to-day. He has been sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of only one year. This is astonishingly below our expectations for which we had held ourselves in readiness. If punishments and imprisonments are the reward for the service of the nation, you will have to agree that justice is not done to him. This is not the least even of what he

deserved.

"He had desired me that this message should be conveyed to you with his best compliments that at this time the condition of neither of the two parties is such as to come to a settlement. For us, therefore, the only work is to prepare ourselves. Bengal as it is, giving a lead to-day will continue to do so. Kindly include the name of Bengal along with Bardoli and others. And if the time for settlement come, no importance should be attached to our release. Release should be absolutely ignored and the terms of settlement should be based upon the merits."

CHAPTER VI.

"A GREAT STATEMENT"

In June 1921 the Working Committee had laid down that "In the event of prosecution or a civil suit being brought against Non-co operators, they should not participate in the proceedings beyond making before the court a full statement of facts in order to establish their innocence before the public."

The result was that many memorable statements were recorded during the Civil Disobedience campaign in 1921. All of them possessed some special characteristics of their own but it is an admitted fact that the statements of Gandhiji and the Maulana were unique and memorable for their forcefulness and appeal.

It was a pretty long statement covering over 33 foolscap sheets and was greatly read throughout the country. Gandhiji in his *Young India* of February 23, 1922 under the caption "A great statement" wrote that every word of it deserved reading and described it "as an eloquent thesis giving the Maulana's views on Khilafat and Nationalism," and "an oration deserving penal servitude for life"

Here are some striking passages from his statement which are a mere translation and surely they cannot convey the same beauty as the original ones written in inspiring Urdu

"Non-co-operation is the result of utter disappointment of the existing conditions. And this disappointment has led to determination for complete change. Non-co-operation on the part of any man reveals his dissatisfaction with the justice of the Government and shows his non-acceptance of force based on injustice, with the effect that he sees no other alternative except a change . . . , .

"History bears witness to it that whenever the ruling powers took up arms against freedom and justice the court-rooms were used as most simple and harmless weapons. The jurisdiction of courts is a force that could be utilized both for justice and injustice. In the hands of a just Government it becomes the best means of righteousness but to the repressive and tyrant Government no other weapon is more useful for vengeance and injustice than this

"Next to battlefields courts have played prominent part in setting the example of injustice in the history of the world. From the holy founders of the religions to the inventors and pioneers of science, there is no holy or righteous personality which was not produced before the courts like criminals

"The iniquities of courts of law constitute an endless list and history has not yet finished singing the elegy of such miscarriage of justice. In that list we observe a holy personage like Jesus, who had to stand in his time before a foreign court and be convicted even as the worst of criminals. We see also in the same list Socrates, who *was sentenced to be poisoned* for no other

crime than that of being the most truthful person of his age. We meet also the name of that great Florentine martyr to truth, the inventor Galileo, who refused to belie his observations and researches merely because their avowal was a crime in the eyes of constituted authority. . . . When I ponder on the great and significant history of the convicts' dock and find that the honour of standing in that place belongs to me to-day, my soul becomes steeped in thankfulness and praise of God"

"The bureaucracy in India is nothing more nor less than the domination which powerful individuals will always normally attain over a nation decaying by its own neglect and internal weaknesses. In the natural course of things such dominant authority cannot possibly countenance any nationalistic awakening or agitations for progress, reform or justice. And as such agitation would spell the inevitable downfall of its dominant power, it seeks to kill all agitation by declaring it a crime against constituted authority. No power would tamely submit to movements likely to bring about its own decline, however much such decline might be in the ultimate interests of justice. This posture of affairs is merely a struggle for existence in which both sides fight desperately for their principles. An awakened nation aspires to attain what it considers its birth right, and the dominant authority would fain not budge an inch from its position of unquestioned way. The contention might be advanced that the latter party even like its opponents is not open to any blame inasmuch as it is merely putt-

ing up a fight for its own survival, and it is quite an incidental matter that its existence happens to be inimical to perpetuation of justice. We cannot deny facts of human nature and its inseparable characteristics. Like good, evil also desires to live in this world and struggle for its own existence. In India also such a struggle for the survival of the fittest has already commenced. Most certainly, therefore, nothing can be a higher crime against the domination of Government, as at present established, than the agitation which seeks to terminate its unlimited authority in the name of liberty and justice. I fully admit that I am not only guilty of such agitation, but that I belong to that band of pioneers who originally sowed the seed of such agitation in the heart of our nation and dedicated their whole lives to the cherishing and breeding of this holy discontent.

“It is my belief that liberty is the natural and God-given right of man. No man and no bureaucracy consisting of men has got the right to make the servants of God its own slaves. However attractive be the euphemisms invented for ‘subjugation’ and ‘slavery,’ still slavery is slavery, and it is opposed to the will and the canons of God. I therefore consider it a bounden duty to liberate my country from its yoke. The notorious fallacies of ‘reform’ and ‘gradual transference of power’ can produce no illusions and pitfalls in my unequivocal and definite faith. Liberty being the primary right of man, it is nobody’s personal privilege to prescribe limits or apportion shares in the distribution of it. To say that a nation should get its liberty in graduated stages is

the same as saying that an owner should by right receive his property only in bits and creditor his dues by instalments. . . . Whatever philanthropic acts might be performed by a man who has usurped our property, his usurpation would still continue to be utterly illegal.

"Evil cannot be classified into good and bad. All that is in fairness possible is to differentiate the varying degree. For instance, we can say very heinous robbery and less heinous robbery, but who can speak of good robbery and bad robbery? I cannot, therefore, at all conceive of any justification for such domination because by its very nature it is an act of iniquity."

"Such is my duty as a man and as an Indian, and religious injunctions have imposed upon me the same duty. In fact, in my view the greatest proof of the truth of my religion is that it is another name for the teaching of the rights of man. I am a Musalman, and by virtue of being a Musalman this has become my religious duty. Islam never accepts as valid a sovereignty which is personal or is constituted of a bureaucracy of a handful of paid executives. Islam constitutes a perfected system of freedom and democracy. It has been sent down to get back for the human race the liberty which has been snatched away from it. Monarchs, foreign dominations, selfish religious pontiffs and powerful sections had alike misappropriated this liberty of man. They had been fondly nursing the belief that power and possession spell the highest right. The moment Islam appeared, it proclaimed that the highest right is not might but right itself. No one except God has got the right to make

serfs and slaves of God's creatures. All men are equal and their fundamental rights are on a par. He only is greater than others whose deeds are the most righteous of all. . . .

"The sovereignty of the Prophet of Islam and of the Khalifas was a perfected conception of democratic equality, and it only could take shape with the whole nation's free will, unity, suffrage and election. This is the reason why the sovereign or president of a republic is like a designated Khalifa; Khilafat literally means nothing more nor less than a representation, so that all the authority a Khalifa possesses consists in his representative character, and possesses no domination beyond this representative authority.

then Islam defines it as a duty of Muslims refuse to acknowledge the moral justification even of an Islamic government, if full play is not granted in suffrage and franchise of the nation, it is perfectly sufficient to add what under Islam would be the ruling given about a foreign bureaucracy. If to-day there was to be established in India an Islamic government, but if the system of that Government was based upon personal monarchy or upon bureaucratic oligarchy, then to protest against the existence of such a Government would still be my primary duty as a Musalman. I would still call that government oppressive and demand its replacement.

"I frankly confess that this original conception of Islamic sovereignty could not be uniformly maintained in its primal purity on account of the selfishness and personal domineering of the later Muslim over-

reigns The mighty magnificence of the emperors of Ancient Rome and of the Shahs of Iran had attracted the Muslim sovereigns powerfully to the dubious glory of great monarchical empires They began to prefer the majestic figures of Kaiser or Khosroe to the simple dignity of the original Khalifas clad oftentimes in old tattered cloaks No period of the dynasties and sovereignties of Islam has, however, failed to produce some true Muslim martyrs, who have made public declarations of the tyrannies and transgressions of such monarchies and joyfully and triumphantly suffered all miseries and hardships which inevitably confronted them in the thorny paths of duty.

"The holy Prophet of Islam has preached the following doctrine to the Muslims 'That man is blessed with the best of deaths who proclaims the truth in the face of a tyrannical administration and is slaughtered in punishment of this deed' The Scripture of Islam, the Holy Quran, defines the greatest attribute of the true Muslim to be 'that they fear not any being except God and whatever they consider to be the truth, they reck not any authority in the public proclamation of such truth' The Quran further defines the national characteristics of the Muslims as follows 'They are the witnesses to truth on God's earth' As long therefore as they continue to be Muslims they cannot desist from giving this public evidence In fact it has designated Muslims as witnesses, i.e. givers of the evidence of truth When the Prophet of Islam extracted a promise of righteousness from any person, one of the

clauses of such a bond used to be, 'I will always proclaim the truth in whatever condition and wherever I may happen to be . . .'

"An outstanding object-lesson in speaking the truth which their national history presents to the Muslims is to be found in the order of an autocratic monarch by which each organ of a rebellious victim's body was to be cut off. The charge against the victim was that he had proclaimed the iniquity of the tyrant. Firm as a rock he stood and took his punishment in all its heinous stages, but his tongue right on to the moment when it was severed went on proclaiming that that autocrat was a tyrant. This is an incident of the reign of the Emperor Abdul Malik, whose domain extended from Syria to Sind. Can anyone then attach any weight to a sentence under Section 124-A as compared to this terrible penalty? I confess that it is the moral decadence of Muslims and their renouncing the real Islamic life that is responsible for the bringing about of this fallen state.

"While I am penning these lines I know there is still living in India many a Muslim who through his weakness pays homage to this very tyranny. But the failure of man to act up to the spirit of certain tenets cannot belie the intrinsic truth of these principles. >

"The tenets of Islam are preserved in its scriptures. These, under no circumstances, make it permissible for Muslims to enjoy life at the expense of liberty. A true Muslim has either to immolate himself or to retain his liberty; no other course is open to him under his

religion To-day the Muslims have come to a firm decision that in freeing their country from its slavery they will take their fullest share along with their Hindu, Sikh, Parsi and Christian brethren

"Continuously in the last twelve years I have been training my community and my country in demanding their rights and their liberty I was only eighteen years old when I first started speaking and writing on this theme I have consecrated my whole being to it and sacrificed the best part of my life, meaning the whole of my youth, to my infatuation for this ideal. For four years I have suffered internment, but during my internment even I have never desisted from pushing on my work and inviting people to this national goal This is the mission of my life, and if I live at all I elect to live only for this single purpose Even as the Quran says, 'My prayers and my observances and my life and my death are all for my Lord, the God of the Universe' I am the first pioneer in this latest phase of that Islamic movement in India which has created a tremendous revolution in the political world of the Indian Muslims and has gradually elevated them to that pinnacle of national consciousness on which they are seen to-day In 1912 I started an Urdu journal, the *Al Hilaal*, which was the organ of this movement and the object of the publication of which was mainly what I have declared above It is an actual fact that within those three years it had created a new atmosphere in the religious and the political life of the Musalmans of India

"In this war of liberty and justice I have adopted

the path of non violent non-co-operation. Opposed to us stands an authority armed with the complete equipment for oppression, excess and bloodshed But we place our reliance and trust, next to God, only upon our own limitless power of sacrifice and unshakable fortitude

"Unlike Mahatma Gandhi my belief is not that armed force should never be opposed by armed force. It is my belief that such opposing of violence with violence is fully in harmony with the natural laws of God in those circumstances under which Islam permits the use of such violence But at the same time, for purposes of liberation of India and the present agitation, I entirely agree with all the arguments of Mahatma Gandhi and I have complete confidence in his honesty It is my definite conviction that India cannot attain success by means of arms, nor is it advisable for it to adopt that course India can only triumph through non violent agitation, and India's triumph will be a memorable example of the victory of moral force "

In the end the Maulana said Mr Magistrate, I will not take any more time of the Court now It is an interesting and instructive chapter of the history which both of us are engaged in preparing The dock has fallen to our lot and to yours the magisterial chair I admit that this chair is as much necessary for this work as this dock. Let us come and finish our part in this memorable drama The historian is eagerly awaiting it and the future is looking forward to us Allow us to occupy this dock repeatedly and continu-

ously and you may also go on writing the judgment again and again. For some time more this work will continue till the gates of another court are flung open. This will be the court of the Law of God Time will act as its judge and pass the judgment. And this will be the final in all respects "

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPLIT.

In February, 1922, Gandhiji declared a sudden suspension of the civil disobedience movement. The general had cried halt as a result of the Chauri Chaura happening where a furious mob had set fire to a police station with half a dozen policemen in it. All the prominent leaders from one end of the country to the other were greatly enraged. Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai and C. R. Dass, the three intellectual stalwarts in the Congress, regarded the action of Gandhiji as most unwise. The rank and file in the Congress also got disappointed since the Swaraj promised within one year at Calcutta Special Session had not come. So this action on the part of Mahatma Gandhi dealt a blow though very slight to his popularity and caused a set-back to the National Movement.

Deshbardhu C. R. Dass along with many of his trusted lieutenants including Subhas Bose was confined in Alipore Jail at the time. He seriously discussed the pros and cons of the situation with his followers and traced out that change of tactics was absolutely essential to rouse the public enthusiasm.

Although the Indian National Congress had boycotted the Government of India Act, 1919 as embodied

in Montague Chelmsford reforms nevertheless C R Dass had been a keen observer of the working of it. He, as we have previously noted during the Special Session at Calcutta, was one of the strongest advocates of entry into legislatures. He always argued that in the absence of Congressmen from the poles the undesirable reactionaries were sure to capture the bodies and the Government would have no difficulty in carrying out their own bureaucratic ways with the support of dummy elected members of the legislatures. Mr Das was firmly of the opinion that the points of vantage should not be left in the hands of the enemy. All elected seats therefore should be captured by Congressmen in all public bodies including Municipal Committees and District Boards. He further believed that if Congress succeed in securing majority in some of the legislatures they would very easily be able to frustrate the plans of the treasury benches and if the Governors or the Viceroy set aside the decisions of the majority by their veto, the Government would stand condemned before the bar of public opinion. So he conceived of the idea of Non-co-operation within the legislatures as the changed tactic for the Congress.

Fortunately or unfortunately soon after his release he was elected to occupy the presidential chair of the Gaya Congress which was expected to be held by the end of December. Pandit Moti Lall Nehru, the outstanding leader* of United Provinces although a Gandhist at heart, had had the courage to differ with him on the question of Council entry. Lalā

Lajpat Rai, the dauntless leader of the Punjab, also possessed similar views as those of Mr. Dass. Apparently the alliance was very strong. But on the other hand the followers of Gandhiji had also demonstrated their will to show their avowed loyalty and unquestioned obedience to their leader and more specially in his absence because he had by now been sent to the gaol on the charge of writing a seditious article in his organ *Young India*. A seemingly hard trial of strength was therefore expected at Gaya

In very tense atmosphere the Gaya Congress met in December 1922. Mr. Rajgopalachar, an outstanding Madras leader, was leading the supporters of Gandhiji. After heated debates when the matter came before the open session of the Congress, the electorates gave their vote of no-changers to Gandhian leadership and thus created an anomalous position

instance of 1 . Dass a meeting was held by his supporters and it was decided that should be formed having for its objects the of the elections of legislatures, central as well local and so also of local bodies Next day the brought two valuable documents in his pocket, presidential address for the year which was of outstanding genius while the second was ion from the distinguished seat of presi- /hen the All-India Congress Committee met of the routine business and lay out a pro- the coming year, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru

got up to announce the formation of Swaraj Party which was later confirmed by the President when he placed his resignation before the House. This decision came to the country as a very serious shock. A tremendous split had occurred in the Congress. It was feared now that the Congress would lose all its strength and importance. In some of the provinces the feelings between the 'no-changers' and 'Swarajists' had grown exceedingly bitter. The Working Committee which was constituted entirely of the 'no-changers' had to resign. In Bengal two rival Congress Committees were set up to function simultaneously, each claiming to be the representative body. This prevailing bitterness made responsible Congressmen consider seriously the consequences to which that this unfortunate rivalry was expected to lead.

CHAPTER VIII

United we stand

The Maulana was released fourteen days after the unfortunate split at Gaya had taken place, and by that time the situation had grown quite serious. The two groups headed by Mr Rajagopalacharia and C R Dass were carrying on a regular word war in the press as well as in the public. The Congress was clearly heading for crisis and the country for a civil war. It is difficult to imagine that a man like Maulana Azad who had the reputation for uniting the irreconcilables and who had in the past averted several communal riots by his skill as a diplomat could stand as a mere spectator while the flames of civil war enveloped the country. He rose to the occasion and in the course of a statement issued to the Press declared

Coming from the jail I see that unfortunately a division has come about in the Congress. I therefore consider it my duty to try my best to reconcile the two opposing parties.'

Maulana Mohd Ali was also opposed to this division and he also lent a helping hand in this matter. A meeting of the A I C C was called at Bombay to consider the situation. The meeting could not end successfully, and the Congress

remained a house divided, but one thing emerged clearly and that was the deepening of confidence of both sides in Maulana Abul-Kalam Azad. The A.I.C.C. decided to call a special session of Congress at Delhi and inevitably the choice of Presidentship fell on Maulana Abul-Kalam Azad. He was elected. The Delhi session 'met in a tense atmosphere. Both sides mustered their full strength. It was reputed that Mr. C. R. Dass had spent thirty-six thousand rupees and covered all the expenses of the Bengal delegates in order to achieve victory for his cause. Tempers were frequently let loose and great responsibility devolved on the President. But this thirty-five year old President of the Congress (who was the youngest President in the Congress History), succeeded where the elderly leaders had failed. The scheme he had prepared for compromise was adopted and the Congress passed the following resolution :—

"While re-affirming its adherence to the principles of non-violent non-co-operation, the Congress declares that such Congressmen as have no religious or other conscientious objections against entering the Legislature are at liberty to stand as candidates, and to exercise their right of voting at the forthcoming elections and this Congress therefore suspends all propaganda against entering the councils. The Congress at the same time calls upon the Congressmen to redouble their efforts to carry out the constructive programme of their great leader Mahatma Gandhi by united endeavour to achieve

Swaraj at the earliest moment "

(2)

No sooner had the war of rival ideologies ended than another war flared up in the country. This war was not limited to wordy duels. It was a much more serious affair and leaders of this fight were persons who had not the slightest regard for the welfare of the country. This trouble had originated with *Shuddhi* and *Tabligh* movements. The question as to who started first these utterly senseless movements, is as difficult to answer as the question who came first, the hen or the egg. There is no doubt that communal-minded people on both sides were patiently awaiting for their opportunity and now that the attention of the people was diverted from the non-co-operation movement and a sense of utter frustration and exhaustion was creeping over the entire country it was not difficult to play upon the tired nerves of the people and awaken in them the communal passions. These devil's disciples were responsible for the orgy of communal riots in the years succeeding the Delhi session. The riots took heavy toll of death. It is doubtful if the promoters of these movements converted as many men in their movements as were lost in these riots. The conscience of entire Nationalist India was stirred. Mahatma Gandhi was very much shaken and as a penance for this calamity he undertook a fast.

The ending of the communal imbroglio became a double necessity both for saving the life of Gandhi and saving the lives of millions of people in the

country. It was imperative that this ghastly tragedy should not be allowed to continue. A unity conference was called at Delhi consisting of representatives of various communities. The Maulana presided over this conference. Thus within a space of one year he had been called upon to avert civil war twice. The Maulana has great faith in the teachings of the Quran in this respect and he always quoted the Quran to justify the need of unity between Hindus and Muslims. The Quran tells, says the Maulana:

"(The teachings We gave through all these Prophets was this) "Of yours verily is a single brotherhood of people (there are no separate religions and no separate groups) and I am the single Lord and Cherisher of you all. Therefore worship Me only (and do not be separate in this). But people created divisions among themselves, cut their one religion into little bits. In the end all have to return to Us.

"Therefore (remember this is the truth) whoever works deeds of righteousness and has faith in God, his endeavour will not be in vain. We (are there) to record his right deeds."

"What," says the Maulana, "was the sum and substance of the teachings of all the Prophets who appeared in different ages and among different peoples? What was their message to mankind of different groups? Was it one or many? Verse 92 in measured words declare "You are one single brotherhood of people, the Cherisher or Protector of you all is One only, therefore

do not divide yourselves, worship Him only."

His appeal to the Muslims and Hindus was always couched in a language inspired from the Quran, therefore, it always went straight to the heart and was accepted with the same sincerity with which it was uttered. The Delhi Conference was another triumph for the personality of the Maulana. The Conference passed a resolution calling upon people to settle their disputes through *Panchayats* instead of taking the law in their own hands or going to petty courts. Enthusiastic scenes marked the proceedings of the Conference. The Hindus and Muslims who had assembled in great numbers embraced each other after the end of the Conference. Public meetings were held in which representatives of both communities participated. Gandhiji was very greatly impressed with the success that the Unity Conference had achieved and decided to give up the fast. Peace and sanity again returned to India.

CHAPTER IX

On with the Battle

But though the communal unity was achieved for some time, the Congress programme had received a great set-back. The interests of the people could not be revived so soon towards the problem of their country's independence. During the last five or six years the struggle with the demon of communalism had worn out the Congress and the people were in no mood to take any fresh plunge.

This inertia remained up to the year 1928 when the Simon Commission came to India. This Commission was deputed by His Majesty's Government to see "up to what extent was it desirable to establish the principles of responsible Government in the country." Fortunately or unfortunately the Commission was constituted entirely of Imperial representatives and no Indian was included in it. This was clearly an insult to India, and the Congress reply to this insult was a campaign of boycott. Public meetings were held everywhere calling upon the people to boycott the Commission. The Maulana's part in the boycott was very important. He presided over a protest meeting at Calcutta and after that undertook a tour of the Punjab to further the programme of the Congress. He visited Lahore, Amritsar, Rawalpindi and several other places in this

connection, At Delhi addressing a public meeting on January 1928, he said :—

“ If you cannot, for your country's sake, observe a complete *Hartal* in Delhi on the arrival of Simon Commission on February 3, you should root out of your mind all thoughts of Swaraj and never utter the word of freedom ”

The response was quite phenomenal In Lahore, Amritsar, Delhi, etc., complete *Haral* was observed There was *lathi* charge at Lahore by the police and Lala Lajpat Rai was injured At Lucknow the police resorted to similar methods and there Pt Jawaharlal Nehru received blows of police *lathis* These methods of police created a feeling of resentment and bitterness among the people, and Congress position once again became strong in the country.

(2)

Efforts were however continuously made by the enemies of the Congress to carry on propaganda against it. The Nehru Report was used as a smoke screen by the communalists to attack the Congress The defection of Ali Brothers from the Congress was also a loss to be reckoned with There was great need to counteract this propaganda of the communal-minded Muslims The Nationalist Muslims inside the Congress therefore put their heads together and formed a Nationalist Muslim Conference. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was elected President of the Conference, Dr. Ansari the Treasurer and Mr T. A. Sherwani Secretary This Conference explained to the Muslims the true

significance of the Nehru Report and tried to settle communal disputes in the manner suggested in the Delhi resolution

Since the days of Khilafat the Musalmans had gradually come under the influence of communalists and self-seekers who had displayed more interest in percentages or ratios of services than on bigger issues facing the country and the Maulana wanted to stop these communal bickerings in the country. He had led the Muslims in the freedom struggle of 1921-23 and he wanted to prepare them to march again side by side with their Hindu brethren

(3)

The occasion soon arose. The Congress in its session at Calcutta in 1928 gave a virtual ultimatum to the British Government. One year was fixed as the time limit for the British to give Dominion Status to India, after which Independence was to be declared the goal of the Congress. The year of grace expired in 1929 and on the midnight of December 31, 1930 Jawahar Lal Nehru hoisted the flag of Independence on the banks of Ravi. The struggle started a few months later. Among the Muslim leaders Maulana Azad alone favoured direct action. Dr. Ansari differed. The Ali Brothers who were already estranged from the Congress gave a warning that the Muslims will not support it in its struggle. But the Congress went ahead with its plans. The fears were soon falsified when the Muslims made an enthusiastic response. The NWFP alone

sent several thousand men into prison, while the bloodshed by the brave Pathans in Kissa Khan Bazar, Peshawar, in April 1930, surpassed all records in the history of India's struggle except the Massacre in Jallianwala Bagh in 1919. That was the state of affairs in a predominantly Muslim province. In other provinces where Muslims were not in majority their contribution to the struggle of Independence was also heartening. The Maulana was at the helm of the Congress when the civil disobedience was at its height. He was the Acting President of the Congress when he was arrested on August 30, 1931 at Calcutta under the picketing ordinance for delivering a speech at Meerut on 23rd August. He was brought to Meerut. A Hartal was observed all over India on his arrest. The Maulana refused to take part in his trial and was sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment.

Some time after the arrest of the Maulana Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M. R. Jayakar succeeded in effecting a compromise between the Congress and the Government. Earlier the members of the Working Committee were released to consider over the terms of the compromise. The settlement was at last arrived at and in March 1931 the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed. Government released all political prisoners and Mahatma Gandhi decided to participate in the second Round Table Conference.

Needless to mention that Gandhiji came back empty-handed from England and Lord Willingdon

forced Gandhiji to resume the civil disobedience. It was again appearing doubtful whether the Muslims would take part in the movement or not when National Muslim Conference issued an appeal to the Muslims to join the Civil Disobedience movement. The Maulana was again at the helm this time.

On 15th February the Acting President of the Congress S Sardul Singh Caveeshar was arrested and he appointed Maulana Azad as his successor. After ten days the Government served a notice on the Maulana asking him not to take part in any activity of civil disobedience movement. But the Maulana openly flouted this order. On March 6 police guards were placed outside his residence at Delhi and on 12th March a cordon was flung round the kothi and the Maulana was arrested and detained in the District Jail, Delhi. A short time after that Gandhiji commenced his historic fast unto death and the civil disobedience was called off.

It was again a great set-back to the Congress prestige. In the words of the great Indian patriot Shyt Subhas Chandra Bose

"If the Delhi Pact of 1931 was a blunder, the surrender of 1933 was a calamity of the first magnitude. By suspending the civil disobedience movement at a critical hour work was suffering and the sacrifices of nation for the last thirteen years are virtually undone."

CHAPTER X.

Parliamentary Activities

This suspension of the movement, however, necessitated the change of tactics. There was a section in the Congress who wanted to resume parliamentary activities. The A I C C Session held at Patna in May 1934 decided to accept this proposal and a Parliamentary Board was formed to guide the activities of Congress members in Assembly. Maulana Azad was appointed member of this board. The Congress issued a manifesto concerning the election to the Legislative Assembly. It was declared that those who get elected to Assembly on Congress ticket would oppose the scheme as embodied in the White Paper and get the White Paper rejected. They would end the repressive laws and get such Acts passed which would be of great benefit to Indians.

The years 1934-1935 are the years of political slump in India. Apart from tepid parliamentary debates, there was no political activity in the country. In 1935 the Government of India Act was passed and the British Government was determined to thrust this Constitution on India. In 1936 Jawahar Lal became the Congress President and his fighting address delivered at Lucknow was a challenge to the Government and a warning to the people. It was

decided that the Congress should contest elections and smash the constitution from within

The question of office acceptance was deferred to a special A I C C Session to be called immediately after the elections were over. The Fuzpur Congress merely dotted the i's and crossed the t's of the Lucknow resolution. A special convention was called in Delhi in March 1937, consisting of all Congress M L A's and it was decided to accept offices wherever Congressmen were in majority. The A I C C ratified this decision. The result was that the Congress ministries were formed in six out of eleven Provinces and a Parliamentary Sub-Committee was formed to guide the Congress Ministries. The Committee consisted of Sardar Patel, Babu Rajender Prasad and Maulana Azad. Work was divided in zones and each member was allotted his sphere of work.

(2)

In N W F P the Congress Assembly Party was the strongest single party but not strong enough to form a Ministry. It was difficult to imagine that the province of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan should be without a Congress Ministry. Maulana Azad went there himself.

The position there was that the Congress Party wanted four more members to have working majority. He addressed several meetings and appealed to the patriotic sense of the Pathans and told them that they were strong enough to establish Government in the whole of India.

let alone a province like N.W.F. He also saw different members of the Assembly and after efforts of five or six days succeeded in getting some members to sign the Congress pledge, and the Congress Ministry was firmly established.

But the work which set the seal on his reputation as a great diplomat apart from being a great scholar and philosopher was the settling of zamindar question in Bihar. The Congress had promised relief to Kisans in its election manifesto. The time had come to fulfil that promise. It was a difficult question to solve, because the landlords in zamindari provinces of U P and Bihar could not be pleased. They would not yield to the Kisans' demand even in smallest matters. A deputation of Zamindars of Bihar had gone to meet the Congress leaders in Calcutta in October 1937. They had put their case before Babu Rajender Prasad, who sought the help of Maulana Azad in this matter. Maulana agreed to come to Patna. He went there and worked along with Babu Rajendar Prasad to find out a solution of the problem. They met several Congressmen, who were interested in the tenants' problem, and later on they saw the Zamindars (landlords). The first thing that they got the Zamindars to agree to was that the burden of the tenant must be reduced, because situated as he was the peasant could not live a comfortable life. The questions of percentage, and the refractory tenant was also considered.

The existing law gave dictatorial powers to

Zamindars who could deprive the tenant of everything that he had and ruin him and who often sold lands and belongings of tenants and earned more than the default of the peasant. It was found difficult to persuade them to part with this privilege, which they had enjoyed since the days of Company's rule.

Maulana Azad appealed to the Zamindars to do everything with good grace and not to take away with one hand what they gave with the other. This appeal had the desired effect. In some cases even before the Act was passed, the Zamindars began to behave as though the Act was already in force.

The material results achieved were important. Rent had been reduced on an average by about 25 per cent, in some cases the rate of reduction being as high as 40 to 50 per cent. Tenants had secured rights which made them practically proprietors of their lands subject only to payment of rent. Their movables and houses were not liable to be attached or sold on account of arrears of rent and the holding too was not liable to be sold in its entirety, but only such part of it as was considered sufficient to clear the arrears of revenue. They were free to sell it or otherwise transfer it to anyone they liked. If, however, they wanted a distribution of rent as between the portion sold and the portion retained, they had to pay a small fee to the landlord. The landlord was bound to recognise all transfers. Tenants had the right to build a house, plant an orchard or dig a well on their

land. They were not liable to be ejected for arrears of rent. They had thus been made practically independent of the landlord, save only to the extent of having to pay the rent to the landlord which too had been reduced

There was another great gain. The question of agricultural income-tax to be imposed on the Zamindars could not be solved without an understanding between Zamindars and the Government. The question came up for the first time in Bihar and due to intervention of the Maulana an understanding was arrived at. The part that the Maulana played in these negotiations can be best judged by the statement of Babu Rajendra Prasad about Maulana's visit to Bihar. He wrote :—
“ During the talks with the Zamindars and the tenants the Maulana's great acumen and power of persuasion came into full play. He started with a handicap, not being familiar with the details of tenancy law in Bihar. But as the discussions progressed, he soon acquired sufficient knowledge of this complicated law and was able to take quick decisions and what was more to bring others to his own point of view. The discussions lasted for many days on the first occasion and most points were settled. But the Maulana Sahib had to pay a second visit and stay at Patna for several days again. The agreement between the Congress and Zamindars was thus hammered out after long discussions. We purposely left out the Kisan Sabha from the negotiations, for we did not want to fetter their freedom to agitate for more if they thought it neces-

sary. We felt that a legislation with the consent of the Zamindars could be passed quickly and the relief intended could reach the tenants sooner than if the legislation had to be passed in the teeth of their opposition. And so it was. The law was passed within a few months of the Ministry taking office, and by the time it resigned rent reduction proceedings sanctioned by the new law had been finished in many places and had made much progress in the greater part of the province. I think Bihar is the only province where relief which the Congress Ministry intended and agreed to give to the tenancy was actually given, both in the matter of tenancy and the income tax legislation. On occasions when negotiations seemed to be on the breaking point the Maulana's great tact, method of approach, and power of persuasion saved the situation."

Another matter in which Maulana's intervention was sought by the Bihar Government was the hunger strike of political prisoners in early months of 1938. The Maulana met the political prisoners in Hazari Bagh jail and persuaded them to give up the hunger strike. He promised improvement in their standard of living and ultimately their release. The Bihar Government fulfilled all these promises.

(3)

Like N. W. F. P. Sind was a source of perennial anxiety to the Congress High Command. It was one of the weakest links in the Congress chain. The Congress Party of Sind had supported the Allab Bux

Ministry ever since its formation, but differences arose over the question of Land Assessment in Sind. Maulana Azad went to Sind and succeeded in bringing about a compromise between the Congress and the Sind Ministry.

This patched-up compromise lasted only for a short time and soon there was trouble again in Sind. The Muslim Leaguers wanted to take undue advantage of the differences between the Congress and the Sind Ministry and they were trying to form a Ministry of their own but their plans were soon upset when the Maulana cleared the Congress position in this connection. He said :

"The Congress party of Sind stands for a definite aim, and it has lofty ideals before it. The Ministry which will fulfil the Congress programme will be supported by the Congress."

The attitude of the Muslim League in Sind was typical example of its attitude towards Congress everywhere. The Congress leaders tried to end these differences and early in 1938, both Gandhiji and Subhas Bose met Jinnah but these talks did not produce any good result. Mr. Jinnah began his scare mongering campaign against the "atrocities" of Congress Ministries. The Congress leaders were much pained by such a cold response of Mr. Jinnah and his attacks on Congress but the Qaid-i-Azam was playing in the hands of reactionaries and title-holders and was not at all ready to hear them.

Mr. Fazl-ul-Haq, taking cue his from speeches of Mr. Jinnah, indulged in similar vituperation. Maulana Azad challenged him to state specific instances when the Congress had treated the Muslims unjustly. Later on Jawaharlal Nehru also made a similar challenge to Mr. Jinnah but neither Mr. Fazl-ul-Haq nor Mr. Jinnah could substantiate these charges.

The elections were won by Subhash Bose, but the rightists were not satisfied. What followed at Tripuri was one of the most inglorious chapters of lives of some of the most brilliant sons of India, who had so far never allowed such bitterness and mutual recriminations to creep in Congress politics. One need not go into details, because about this episode the less said the better, but clearly the Maulana faltered in his duty both at Tripuri and at Calcutta and backed the winning horse. The result was that Subhash Bose ceased to be the President and the opportunity of bringing the two groups together was irretrievably lost.

(5)

During the closing months of 1939 a very important issue faced the Congress. Great Britain had declared war against Germany and India was made a party to it without the consent of her people. The Congress Working Committee protested against this decision of the Government and after several sittings issued a long statement expressing sympathy with Poland, condemning German aggression and calling upon the British Government to declare its war aims pending which the Congress was not to participate in the war efforts. The Congress Ministries were also asked to resign which they did forthwith.

These resignations came as a rude shock to the people who had enjoyed popular rule for some time but for the Muslim League it was a matter of satisfaction and pleasure. The Qaid-i-Azam hurried forth to announce the celebration of the "Day of Deliverance"

because according to him the Musalman had been set free in eight provinces. This latest outburst of the League President was painfully felt by the Maulana. He issued a long statement to the press and strongly protested against this act of the Muslim League. The statement was a determination of the idea of Pakistan as well as the 'Day of Deliverance'.

Regarding Pakistan he said —

"Those who make the proposal are flying in the face of history, ethnology, and the tendency of modern times. When they say we are two nations they beg the question. The ancestors of most of us were common, and I for one do not accept the theory of a superior or inferior race or of different races. Mankind is one race, and we have to live in harmony with one another. Providence brought us together over a thousand years ago. We have fought but so do blood brothers fight. So did Englishmen and Englishmen fight—as in the wars of the Roses. But they did not insist on living as separate nations. During about thousand years we have reacted on one another to our mutual spiritual, cultural, moral and material benefits. They want to put the hands of the clock back by centuries. No, it is no use trying to emphasise the differences. For that matter no two human beings are alike. Every lover of peace must emphasise similarities. What therefore I detest is the communal approach to the national

problem. Nowhere in the world has a national problem been approached on communal lines. In a future constitution determined by India's representatives, the Hindu or the Musalman will have to think of his position and interests not as a Hindu or a Musalman, but as a peasant or a zamindar, as a labourer or a capitalist, and so on. Religious freedom will be one of the fundamental rights under any free constitution, but whatever that constitution, it will be nothing worth unless it reflects equality of opportunity of economic freedom for all. But why must I argue like this? Let Mr. Jinnah get himself elected by the Muslims and come to the constituent assembly and press his demands on behalf of the Muslim India "

Regarding the " Day of Deliverance " and the so-called atrocities of the Congress Ministers over the Muslims he said :

" And now, when it (Congress) has given up the Government of the eight provinces of its own choice and free will, what advice has the League President to offer to the Muslims of India? It is this, that they should march towards the mosques and thank God on their deliverance from the Congress Ministries, which have preferred duty to power and have resigned not only on the issue of India's freedom but for the rights of all the down-trodden peoples of the East. It is difficult for me even to imagine that any group of Muslims, however at loggerheads with the Congress, would tolerate to be presented to the world in

such colours.

"The Muslims have a full right to make whatever kind of struggle they deem fit in the cause of their rights and interests. But this is their internal dispute. They should under no circumstances take any step which can possibly be used against the freedom of India.

"The present attitude of Mr Jinnah is leading them towards this unfortunate position. It clearly means that the Muslims are being made as stumbling block in the path of India's freedom. I warned the Muslims in 1912 against this. It wounds my heart to the core that the need of reiterating the same has again arisen after twenty-seven years.

"And again, after all why is Mr. Jinnah advising the Musalmans to celebrate the day of 'deliverance'? Because they have been saved from all the atrocities of the 'Congress Ministries'. What was the quantity and quality of the aforesaid atrocities? In the words of Mr Jinnah the 'Congress Ministries were actuated by a decidedly anti-Muslim policy and the Congress Ministries both in the discharge of the duties of the administration and in the legislatures have done their best to flout Muslim opinion, to destroy Muslim culture, and interfered with their religious and social life and trampled their economic and political rights'.

"Now, if we admit for the time being that the picture which Mr Jinnah has presented is correct,

let us consider what conclusion can be derived from it. The conclusion is patently obvious. The Governments of eight provinces have been interfering in the religious and social life of Musalmans. They continued to destroy their culture. They trampled down their economic and political rights, and all this havoc was caused not only for a few days, it continued without a break for two-and-a-half years. What action then did the eighty millions of Muslims of India take under such impossible circumstances? Only this, that they waited for thirty long months in the hope of the resignations of the Congress Ministries of their own choice and free will. And when this dream of theirs came true they began to pour their hearts out to the Almighty in a spirit of thanksgiving and like the children of Israel they began to declare that after all their day of deliverance has come. What an honourable picture of the Muslims of India Mr Jinnah wants to paint before the world!

"It is impossible for me as a Muslim to tolerate for a moment such a degrading picture. I absolutely refuse to believe that the eighty million Muslims of India can be inert and helpless to such an extent that in spite of the fact that the eight Governments of their country continued for two-and-a-half years to interfere with their religion, destroy their culture, trample down their economic and political rights, they only meekly waited for the dawn of the day of deliverance. This is a direct insult to the sense of self-respect of the Muslims of India.

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tary sub-committee, the members of the Working Committee, the Ministers of the Provinces and the office-bearers of the Provincial Congress Committees know to what degree my attitude has remained strict and uncompromising in these matters. I was not satisfied with the replies of the Ministries only and it was not uncommon for me to go through the files of such affairs personally and strictly to examine them on every point.

"In this connection I only wish to say that if even a fraction of the allegation of Mr. Jinnah were correct I am not a man who would tolerate the Congress Ministries to remain in their seats even for twenty four hours.

"If Mr Jinnah and his colleagues think that they are saying these things to benefit the cause of the Muslims, I would tell them in all earnestness that they are doing quite the opposite thing and they will do a true service to the Muslims of India if they change their direction as early as possible, the true service for which the Indian Muslims are in the greatest need to-day."

CHAPTER XI

The President

When the Maulana stood for presidentship in 1940, all the communalists and reactionaries were lined up against him. His election was a contested one. M.N. Roy, a man who combines in himself all the qualities of Ramsay Macdonald, Kerensky and Kautsky and lacks the intellectual brilliance and political acumen of these renegades—two of whom were at least partially successful in life and the third goes down in history as at least a scholar of Marxism whose ability even Lenin praised—this Roy, the traitor to the working class movement, betrayed again this time the cause of his country and instead of stepping aside from the presidential election he stood as a candidate against Maulana Azad and thus played into the hands of the reactionaries. The result of this step was a foregone conclusion. Roy suffered one of the worst political set-backs of his career.

The Maulana achieved a victory with a thumping majority. It was a victory of the cause of freedom over the reactionaries, renegades, communalists and war-mongers. The Congress met at Ramgarh in a tense atmosphere. The disappointment with the attitude of the British Government had increased and talk of direct action was in the air. The Maulana

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whole structure of Indian Nationalism will collapse "

About the question of war he said .

"So far as the question of war is concerned our position is quite clear. We see the face of British Imperialism as clearly now as we did in the last war and we are not prepared to assist in the triumph by participating in the war Our case is crystal clear We do not wish to see British Imperialism triumphant and stronger, and thus lengthen the period of our own subjection to it We absolutely refuse to do so Our way lies patently in the opposite direction."

So much about India's relation to the war About Hindu-Muslim unity he was even more inspiring He said —"Full eleven centuries have passed by, since then (since the coming of Muslims in India) Islam has now as great a claim on the soil of India as Hinduism If Hinduism has been the religion of the people here for several thousand of years, Islam also has been their religion for a thousand years Just as a Hindu can say with pride that he is an Indian and follows Hinduism so also we can say with equal pride that we are Indians and follow Islam I shall enlarge this subject still further. The Indian Christian is equally entitled to say with pride that he is an Indian and is following a religion of India namely Christianity "

He wanted Musalmans to take full share in the struggle for liberation As a Muslim he could not think of Muslim tolerating alien rule He reiterated his faith in a constituent assembly The upshot of Ramgarh Congress was that Gandhi was made General

of the Congress, and entrusted with all powers of 'war' and peace. The negotiations with Viceroy were started but they failed and Satyagraha was launched. The Satyagraha was 'individual' this time and prominent leaders were victims of repression. Maulana Azad was also arrested and imprisoned.

Towards the close of 1941 he was released along with Jawaharlal Nehru and other prominent Congress leaders because in view of Nazi attack on Russia and Japan's entry into the war an orientation had come in British policy or at least it seemed so. The British statesmen wanted to woo India in order to save their face before their American and Russian allies. Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to India to carry on negotiations with Indian leaders at Delhi. The Congress appointed two people to represent its case: Jawaharlal Nehru and M. Azad. The Congress felt the danger of invasion acutely. It was in earnest about defending the country if the British would give it a freehand. The Maulana had declared that he would be the first man to draw sword in defence of his country provided a national government was formed in India. Jawaharlal was also of the same opinion. But the British Government refused to clasp the hand of friendship offered by these two illustrious sons of India. They were not prepared to part with any real power. The negotiations broke down.

Since the failure of Cripps negotiations the Congress attitude has gradually undergone change. The Government's policy in U.P. and in other provinces has been one of arrests and searches. Maulana Azad

in a statement dealing with arrests in U.P. said that the Government were forcing hands of the Congress to give a reply to these repressive measures. What form that reply will take is a matter of conjecture but Maulana's speeches show that he would not lag behind when the call comes.

APPENDIX.

Statement of the Congress Working Committee about War demanding the British Government to explain their War aims

The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe. The principles, which should guide the nation in the event of war, have been repeatedly laid down by the Congress, and only a month ago this Committee reiterated them and expressed their displeasure at the flouting of Indian opinion by the British Government in India. As a first step to dissociate themselves from the policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress-members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session. Since then, the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people, whose declared wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must

take the gravest view of these developments.

The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well-established principles and recognised standards of civilised behaviour. It has been in Fascism and Nazism the intensification of the principles of Imperialism, against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must, therefore, unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it.

ratie State in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

The Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression, but the history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. During the war of 1914-18, the declared war aims were the preservation of democracy, self-determination and freedom of small nations, and yet the very Governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying Imperialist designs for the carving up of the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious Powers added largely to the Colonial domains. *The present European War itself signifies the abject failure of the Treaty of Versailles* and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an Imperialist peace on the defeated nations. The one hopeful outcome of that Treaty, the League of Nations, was muzzled and strangled at the outset and later killed by its parent States.

Subsequent history has demonstrated afresh how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may be followed by an ignoble desertion. In Manchuria, the British Government connived at aggression, in Abyssinia,

they acquiesced in it, in Czecho-Slovakia and Spain, democracy was in peril, and it was deliberately betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very Powers who had previously declared their firm faith in it.

Again, it is asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended, and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective, and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices, but again and again, the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored, and faith has not been kept with them.

If the war is to defend the *status quo*, Imperialist possessions, Colonies, vested interests and privileges, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But, there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India or elsewhere and Imperialism and Fascism. *If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end Imperialism in her own possessions, and establish full democracy in India and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination of framing their own constitution through a constituent assembly without external interference.*

and must guide their own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

The crises that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only, but of humanity and will not pass like other crises or wars, leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another and on a reorganisation of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all. *India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern Imperialism, and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganisation.* But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to work for this great end. Freedom today is indivisible and every attempt to retain Imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead

inevitably to fresh disaster.

The Working Committee have noted that many Rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own States, in which, today, undiluted autocracy reigns supreme. The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the Rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and, more particularly, past and present occurrences in India, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination, or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The true measure of democracy is the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and at the present. Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In the struggle for that new world order the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer any co-operation in a war which is conducted on Imperialist lines, and which is meant to consolidate Imperialism in

India and elsewhere.

In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves.

The Working Committee, therefore, invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and Imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of Imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action to-day and give shape to the future.

War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate, but war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during recent years in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities. Cold blooded massacres, torture and the utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world, and unless checked and ended will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China but it will not end till its root causes of Fascism and Imperialism are removed. To that end the Working Committee are prepared to give their co-operation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of Imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

people to end all internal conflict and controversy and, in this hour of peril, to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world.

